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interrogated, resisters refused to mention these previous illnesses. Opposition to peyotism is comparable to most Indians' attitude toward government hospitals."[a]

Five informants condemn peyotism because of its unsanitary ritual, citing the chewing of peyote buttons by the chief for others to swallow, the drinking of blackened water from the drum, and the use of a common spoon for the ritualistic breakfast. Two maintain peyote turns the skin black; another insists it dries the blood. Only six believe peyotism is bad because it keeps patients from proper hospital treatment, whereas twenty are certain peyote is unnecessary because shamans cure better. Three of these latter are former peyotists, treated by shamans after unsuccessfully using peyote.

Other arguments for supporting peyotism have a religious basis. Five members said they joined because it was a satisfying way to worship "the one true God," at least four being active in both Protestant and peyote meetings.[b] Peyote visions of dead relatives in a happy state, of God and Jesus welcoming the Indians in a beautiful land, of witches frustrated, of the creation of the earth and all living things are proof that peyotism is the true Indian religion. Bright fields, kaleidoscopic colors, attractive nude women, and many other types of delusions are pleasurable experiences, but in most hallucinations the Indians find divine instruction.[c] For three or four members, these revelations constitute the principal appeal, whereas most consider them incidental, and seven report seeing nothing, even after eating twenty-four buttons. Visions reveal peyote's power, but only Henry Jack believes they impart individual power. All consider peyote a great teacher and already new peyote songs have been received by three. Visions are merely part of the religious aspect of the cult."

For several Washo-Paiute cultists, peyote protects from witchcraft, a function also attributed to the cactus by the Taos Indians and emphasized by the Mescalero as peyote's principal virtue.[d] Some Washo-Paiute also carry "chief peyotes" as fetishes, such as is commonly done in the Plains.[e]

Among the opponents, only half a dozen Indians fight peyotism on religious grounds, and they stress other reasons. Their arguments are of three types: First, peyotism is not really a religion at all. In denying that peyotism is a religion, resisters accuse Ben Lancaster of praying, quoting the Bible, and making moral speeches only to attract Indians to be robbed or raped.[f] The Christian missionaries, of course, attack peyote on religious grounds and provide arguments for their followers. Second, aboriginal religion is better. Preference for aboriginal religion is implicit in preference for shamanism; shaman Blind Mike (W,2) said his personal guardian spirit warned him against peyote and protected him during the one meeting he visited. Third, Indians lose missionary gifts. Hank Pete (W,2) condemns

[a] U. S. Senate Hearings, 1932, 15131–15141, 15202.

[b] Joe Green and Johnny Cleveland were invited to speak at a conference of Nevada missionaries at Reno, October, 1938. The Rev. Mr. Dunlap affirmed that neither ever believed in peyote or used it.

[c] Petrullo writes, ". . . a prime law of peyotism is that Peyote is the teacher of Religion."

[d] My data are in accord with Schultes' view (1938: 712) concerning the Plains: "The peyote vision is incidental and of little significance," and in contrast to Shonle's thesis (p. 39) that "the underlying belief in the supernatural origin of visions is important among the factors contributing to the diffusion of peyote and in a general way defines the area of its probable spread," and to La Barre's (p. 58) that, "though infrequently expressed as an official motive, the vision-producing physiological effect of peyote is probably the major reason."

[e] Parsons, 67–68; Opler, 1937; La Barre, 72, 97–98.

[f] La Barre, 72.

[g] Ethnologists have often said that Christian elements in peyotism were recently added in order to make the cult less objectionable to white men. La Barre (43, fn. 85) states: "In the Plains peyotism largely followed the Ghost Dance frustration of anti-white sentiment and preached conciliation instead; such Christian elements as were added had a largely propagandist function in that direction."